

## **GUIDELINES WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH A PERSON WHO IS DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING**

- It is appropriate to use the terms deaf or hard of hearing person when referring to a person with a hearing loss.
- Hard of hearing, and deaf individuals do not communicate in the same ways. Deaf people tend to utilize their visual skills, hard of hearing people tend to utilize their listening and speaking skills.
- To get the attention of a person with a hearing loss, call his/her name. If there is no response, you can lightly touch him/her on the arm or shoulder, or wave your hand in his/her field of vision an appropriate distance from his/her face.
- Always look directly at a person who has a hearing loss. Use eye to eye contact.
- Watch the individual's eyes to ensure understanding - do not depend on affirmative head nodding only.
- Make sure that your mouth can be seen.
- Use facial expressions and body language to communicate the emotion of a message, such as displeasure or approval.
- If you are asked to repeat yourself several times, try rephrasing your sentence.
- Speak directly to the deaf or hard of hearing person at a moderate pace while using sign language.
- Be aware of the environment. Large, crowded rooms and hallways can be very difficult for persons with hearing loss. Bright sunlight and shadows also present barriers.
- When using an interpreter:
  - Always address your comments directly to the deaf person, never to the interpreter.
  - Always face the individual, and not the interpreter.